WAYS TO TEACH LEARNERS HOW TO MANAGE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS

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Improving students' capacity to assess issues and consider multiple solutions contributes to improved, less violent conflict resolution. Whether it is a disagreement over who wins the game or a deeper disagreement about beliefs or personalities, any teacher understands that conflict between students is normal in any learning institution.

Helping students to resolve conflicts with peers is an essential factor of classroom management. However, resolving the issue for students rather than helping students address conflicts on their own can prevent the formation of critical conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. Teachers must educate students on how to deal with conflicts, use self-control, and remain calm. It is critical to provide learners with conflict resolution skills to strengthen their interpersonal success.

CREATIVE WAYS TO HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY BIG EMOTIONS, SELF-REGULATE, AND RESOLVE INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS

1. Identify conflicts: Teachers may help learners think considerably about their emotions to help them understand the various sizes of problems they may confront, including how to recognize conflicts with other learners.

Students participate in discussing the types of problems they encounter and complete a big-versus-small-problem worksheet with real-life examples. Various types of problems are written down on pieces of paper, ranging from losing your homework to having a relative in the hospital, and students categorize them based on their size. Teachers may

get suggestions from learners on how to solve the conflicts and modify such solutions if needed.

2. A pathway to peace: To manage their own conflicts, learners can use a six-step problem-solution pathway. The path is typically spray-painted or hand-painted onto a concrete surface, with patterns for where each student's feet can be placed. Learners can progress through the path by answering a series of questions aloud while standing across from each other. Questions like, "What is the issue?" What are your thoughts about the situation? How do you consider others' feelings? ... may assist students in resolving conflicts. Students discuss solutions collaboratively, with adult supervision, and agree on a plan to move forward by peaceful means.

3. The pros and cons: Improving students' ability to assess their options and examine a variety of alternatives as well as potential consequences leads to better, less impulsive choices when addressing conflicts.

Providing information in a decision matrix allows students to practice empathic thinking by establishing a framework for them to consider the costs and benefits of their actions. Students can use a simple point system to measure alternatives and analyze their effects (the pros and cons) on themselves and others. Teachers may use positive numbers to represent pros, while negative numbers may represent cons.

For example: A student may have to choose between teasing a classmate and being an ally to the victim, or participating in the bullying. A course of action receives zero points if the student cannot see any beneficial results. The student then considers the possible negative consequences of the decisions, such as hurt feelings or punishing consequences for anyone involved, and deducts one point for each. While an actual decision matrix is not always useful in any circumstance, once grasped, the method can be utilized quickly to evaluate the alternatives in a potential dispute.

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4. Transforming Conflicts into Learning Opportunities: Encourage students to use sticky notes to write an issue or problem they are experiencing. While the approach can be applied to any type of problem—academic or interpersonal—it is especially useful for conflict resolution. Each student is given enough time to speak about his or her troubles after being partnered with a classmate, and the designated partner can provide suggestions on how to solve the problem.

5. Practicing Role Play Conflict-Solution: Student involvement in hypothetical conflict situations or group role-playing allows them to exercise responding to real-life conflict. They can consider the advantages and disadvantages of each option before making a decision. Another benefit is that students learn to value their peers' perspectives and are encouraged to be more innovative in identifying solutions to solve problems.

6. Shifting into Valuable Perspective: Create more durable conflict resolutions. Seeing the problem from a different angle through the eyes of the teacher can help the student temporarily disengage himself or herself from his or her own behavior preference. Allowing students to interact through another person's thoughts—a practice known as scripted empathy—may result in uncomfortable silence at first, but teachers should wait at least 10 seconds for students to process the question, use their empathy, and construct a response.

7. A Significant Help from a Good Friend: Students receive instruction in the art of peer mediation. Then, as members of the Mediation Team, they can assist other students in resolving issues that arise on the school compound. If a Mediation Team member notices a possible conflict, they will guide the students and ask if they want to participate in peer mediation. Students can also ask for peer mediation if all parties are willing to participate.

Students are directed to a quiet area on campus designated for these discussions, and the resolution process starts under adult guidance. Depending on the nature of the disagreement, this can take only a few minutes or several days.

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Learning how to deal with disputes and conflict is an important part of social-emotional development. Cooperation, empathy, and self-control are all social skills that are essential for emotional growth and conflict management. Aiding students in developing strong social-emotional learning skills and developing the competencies outlined in the co-creative understanding for academic, social, and emotional learning can strengthen children's learning development, leading to lifelong success.

References:

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